

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7739
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: THE SPD SACKS JUSO CHAIRMAN BENNETER

REFS: A. BONN 5056; B. BONN'S A-103 OF MARCH 31, 1977

BEGIN SUMMARY: AFTER JUSO CHAIRMAN BENNETER REFUSED TO
KNUCKLE UNDER TO A NEW SPD ULTIMATUM, THE PARTY SUSPENDED
HIM FROM OFFICE AND LAUNCHED STEPS TO EXPEL HIM FROM ITS
RANKS. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE SPD DIRECTORATE ON APRIL 27 PLACED YOUNG
SOCIALIST (JUSO) CHAIRMAN KLAUS-UWE BENNETER UNDER AN
IMMEDIATE THREE-MONTH SUSPENSION FROM ALL PARTY
PRIVILEGES (INCLUDING THE JUSO CHAIRMANSHIP), AND
LAUNCHED A DISCIPLINARY ACTION TO EXPEL HIM FROM THE
PARTY.

2. IN ANNOUNCING THIS DECISION, SPD SPOKESMAN SCHWARTZ SAID THAT THIS DECISION HAD BEEN ALMOST UNANIMOUS (I.E., 34 OUT OF 36 VOTES). HE ATTRIBUTED IT TO BENNETER'S STUBBORN REFUSAL TO RETRACT REMARKS MADE IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH THE LEFT-WING WEEKLY, "KONKRET," WHICH VIOLATE BASIC SPD PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES. SCHWARTZ CITED IN PARTICULAR BENNETER'S COMMENTS THAT (1) JUSO'S DO NOT REGARD MEMBERSHIP IN THE SPD AS A "DOGMA" AND (2) COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNISTS IN THE FRG IS NOT TO BE AVOIDED "WHEN IT SEEMS POLITICALLY USEFUL TO US AND STRENGTHENS OUR OWN ORGANIZATION." HE ADDED THAT THE EXPULSION PROCEEDING WILL TAKE UP OTHER OBJECTIONABLE REMARKS IN THIS INTERVIEW -- E.G., THAT THE CDU/CSU REPRESENT THE "CLASS OPPONENT" BUT THAT COMMUNISTS, WHILE POLITICAL OPPONENTS, ARE NOT "CLASS ENEMIES."

3. THE "KONKRET" INTERVIEW SEEMS TO HAVE PERSUADED THE SPD LEADERSHIP THAT BENNETER'S EARLIER RETREAT ON THE ISSUE OF TACTICAL ALLIANCES WITH COMMUNISTS (REF B) HAD BEEN BOGUS. BENNETER'S REFUSAL TO BOW TO SPD BUSINESS MANAGER BAHR'S ULTIMATUM THAT HE RETRACT HIS "KONKRET" REMARKS OR STEP DOWN LEFT THE PARTY WITH LITTLE CHOICE OTHER THAN TO SACK HIM. IN SUPPORTING BAHR'S ULTIMATUM, PARTY CHAIRMAN WILLY BRANDT DECLARED THAT BENNETER WANTS A PARTY OTHER THAN THE ONE COMMITTED TO THE GODESBERG PROGRAM, AND HE DRUBBED BENNETER FOR REGARDING ALLEGIANCE TO THE SPD AS A TACTIC RATHER THAN A COMMITMENT. SIGNIFICANTLY, A MIDDLE-LEFT MEMBER OF THE DIRECTORATE, RUDI ARNDT OF FRANKFURT, MADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE FORMAL PROPOSAL THAT BENNETER EAT HIS WORDS OR GET OUT. TODAY'S VOTE SHOWED THAT BENNETER AND HIS STAMOKAP VIEWS HAVE NO SUPPORT IN THE SPD LEADERSHIP.

4. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE SPD, UNDER ITS STATUTES, HAS THE POWER TO TAKE SUCH EXTREME ACTION AGAINST ANY MEMBER, OR AGAINST ANY OF ITS FOUR "WORKING GROUPS" (THE JUSO'S ARE IN THIS CATEGORY) WHICH ARE INTEGRAL UNITS OF THE PARTY. IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, THE SPD HAS BEGUN TO CLAMP DOWN ON THE MORE FREEWHEELING CRITICS IN ITS RANKS. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, BRANDT HAS WARNED THOSE WHO SEEK A "PARTY IN THE PARTY." AT THE MONDAY MEETING OF THE DIRECTORATE, HIS ALLUSION TO THE JUSO CHAIRMAN WAS UNMISTAKABLE.

5. AT THIS POINT, WE JUDGE THAT THE DECISION AGAINST BENNETER WILL LIKELY WIDEN THE FISSURES IN JUSO RANKS. IT WILL, HOWEVER, HELP THE BADLY BATTERED IMAGE OF THE SPD AMONG THE GERMAN VOTERS.

STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

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